
Your Diet and Hemodialysis

When your kidneys no longer work the way they should, following a special diet and having dialysis treatments will help keep extra water and waste from building up in your body.

You will be asked to limit foods that are high in:

- ❖ sodium
- ❖ potassium
- ❖ phosphorus
- ❖ liquids



Your diet is an important part of your overall care.

- ❖ When your dialysis begins, it will be important for you to eat more high quality protein foods like lean beef, lean fresh pork, poultry, fish, seafood, eggs, egg whites and egg substitute to meet your daily protein needs.
- ❖ Be sure to ask your dietitian if you have any questions or need help with meal planning, grocery shopping tips, cooking ideas or tips for eating out.
- ❖ Remember that following a special diet for your kidneys can be enjoyable and healthy.
- ❖ Always avoid star fruit (carambola), this fruit can be toxic for people with kidney disease.

Protein

Protein is needed to help build and maintain your bones, muscle and skin. You need to eat protein everyday because the body does not store it. Now that you have started dialysis, you need to eat a higher protein diet to meet your body's protein needs.



- ❖ Be sure to eat protein-rich foods at every meal. Choose foods like lean beef, lean fresh pork, poultry, fish, seafood, eggs, egg whites and egg substitutes to meet your daily protein needs.
- ❖ Peanut butter, nuts, seeds, dried beans, peas and lentils may need to be limited because they are high in both potassium and phosphorus.
- ❖ Most people need about 8 to 10 ounces of high protein foods every day.
- ❖ Your dietitian will help you plan a diet with the right amount of protein for you.

Sodium

Sodium is a mineral found naturally in foods. It is found in large amounts in table salt and in many packaged foods. Eating too much sodium can make you thirsty, cause your body to retain too much fluid and may raise your blood pressure.



It may take time to adjust to the flavors of food without added salt or sodium, but in time, you will adjust to these new flavors and learn to add just the right herbs and spices to make your food taste good.

Avoid foods high in sodium such as:

- ❖ Most canned foods, boxed foods and some frozen dinners
- ❖ Processed meats like hot dogs, bacon, ham, corn beef, sausage and cold cuts
- ❖ Most canned soups and dry soup mixes
- ❖ Condiments such as BBQ sauce, soy sauce, mustard, relish, ketchup, olives, pickles, onion salt, garlic salt, seasoning salt
- ❖ Salted pretzels, chips and crackers

Look for low sodium versions of your favorite foods.

Potassium

Potassium is another important mineral found in food. It is likely that you will need to limit the amount of high-potassium foods you eat each day.



Large amounts of potassium are found in foods such as:

- ❖ Bananas, cantaloupe or honeydew melon, kiwi, nectarine, oranges
- ❖ All dried fruits such as apricots, dates, prunes, raisins
- ❖ Potatoes, tomatoes, winter or acorn squash, cooked spinach, avocado, pumpkin
- ❖ Juices like orange, prune, tomato and vegetable
- ❖ Milk, cheese and yogurt
- ❖ Most salt substitutes (check with your doctor or dietitian before using)
- ❖ Chocolate, coffee, nuts, dried beans, split peas
- ❖ Bran cereal, whole wheat foods



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- ❖ Your dietitian will help you plan a diet with the right amount of potassium for you.

Phosphorus

Eating foods high in phosphorus will raise the phosphorus level in your blood and over time, weaken your bones. It is important to limit the amount of high phosphorus foods in your diet. Phosphorus is a mineral that is found in large amounts in foods such as:



- ❖ Dairy products such as milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream
- ❖ Nuts and peanut butter
- ❖ Dried beans and peas such as kidney beans, pinto beans, split peas and lentils
- ❖ Bran cereal, whole wheat foods
- ❖ Beverages such as cocoa, beer and dark cola drinks, some bottled iced tea
- ❖ Your dietitian will help you plan a diet with the right amount of phosphorus for you.

Liquids

Drinking too much liquid may cause shortness of breath, swelling in your legs or high blood pressure. Your dietitian will help you learn the right amount of liquids for you to drink each day.



Liquids (fluids) are foods or beverages that are liquid at room temperature, such as:

- ❖ Coffee, tea
- ❖ Sodas, sport drinks, juice, lemonade, beer, wine
- ❖ Popsicles, sherbet, ice cream, sorbet and frozen yogurt
- ❖ Soup and broth
- ❖ Yogurt, pudding and gelatin
- ❖ Water, ice cubes



Keep track of all of the liquid that you drink each day. Use a measuring cup to find out the amount of liquid that your favorite glass and mug holds. Until you get used to measuring, write down the amount of liquid you drink each day.